

Redcliffe church from the cross-aisle downwards, and as the church was finished as it now is. The church "from the cross-aisle downwards" would consist of the nave with its aisles and porches, and include the completion of the tower and spire. William Canynge died in 1396, and as 1376 was nearly the date which they might set to the transition from decorated to perpendicular (which would, however, have been in progress some years before, and have continued for some years after), whatever he erected would, probably, be chiefly in the perpendicular style, but retaining traces of the decorated. They must not, however, depend too closely on the date given in the chronicle—it might mark the year in which Canynge began to build, or it might express a period at which his work was so far advanced as to attract attention from its splendid appearance. The tower and porch were both probably finished by or before 1396. The porch, though appearing to be later than the tower, was probably carried on without pause, but slowly, during De Burton's life and after his death. The north porch, which was of highly enriched decorated work, appeared to be late in the style, and might have been built somewhere about the year 1376, but he should say, more probably before than after. He thought it very doubtful whether the works at any time altogether ceased; but, considering the extraordinary and costly beauty of the north porch, and its unique character, as well as the singularity of its position, it was remarkable that they had no clue to the person by whom it was really built. The portions of Redcliffe church which were undoubtedly built by William Canynge, the elder, were in great part destroyed by the fall of the spire, in a thunder storm, in 1445.

In Redcliffe church the transepts had an aisle on each side; and perhaps no other case of a parish or even a conventual church could be instanced in which the same occurred. Among the English cathedrals there were three only—Westminster, York, and Ely, where such were to be met with. In cross churches the principal tower usually stood over the point (cross, or intersection) where the nave, choir, and transepts met—of course supported on piers of sufficient magnitude. These piers in Redcliffe church, though thicker than those with which they ranged, were hardly of such thickness as to warrant the belief that they were intended to carry a tower. The situation of Redcliffe tower, at the west end of the north aisle, was rather unusual; but there seemed to be no fixed rules for the location of towers, as they found them in various positions. Perhaps the completest form for cathedrals was to have the principal tower in the centre of the cross, and two smaller ones at the west end of the aisles of the nave, as at York, Westminster, Litchfield, &c. In smaller churches they occasionally found the tower at the east or west end of one or other of the aisles, and not unfrequently upon the north or south side of the building, while in some few instances, as at Berkeley, it was detached from the church, as was often the case with the Italian Campanili. In St. James's Church, in Bristol, the tower, which was of much later date than the rest of the structure, was at the east end of the south aisle—an extremely unusual position. Probably the original Norman tower may have stood between the nave, still existing, and the chancel, now destroyed—a position not unusual in Norman churches; still, it was quite possible that it occupied the site of the original tower, having been so erected to bring it more prominently into view. The tower of Redcliffe must have been in connection with the older church of Simon de Burton; and it evidently occupied the same position relatively to that as it did to the present building. Arguments in support of this view might be drawn from the position of the inner north porch—which (as he had stated) was probably older than even the lower stage of the tower, and from the nature of the ground, sinking as it did, to the north and west; but a conclusive one was furnished by the tower itself. It was quite plain that the north and west sides were always of solid masonry, whilst the eastern side had always an arched opening communicating clearly with the north aisle of the nave and the south side. No doubt the present situation was selected for so grand a feature as that most imposing tower, because it would

stand in full view to those passing up Redcliffe-street, or entering the city from Bedminster. The early architects rarely failed to render a building picturesque, both as a whole and in its parts, even when they had some more important object in view; but when free scope was allowed them, as was the case in ecclesiastical architecture with bell towers, which were never regarded as essential parts of the structure, they were sure to turn it to the best advantage, for the dignity and general effect of the fabric. Redcliffe church had three porches—or, perhaps, to speak more correctly, a single porch on the south side and a double one on the north. Porches rarely occur but on the north and south sides of the nave; the grand entrance being generally in the centre of the western front.

The stone roofs of our gothic cathedrals and churches formed the greatest triumph of the masonic art. In the groined roofs raised by the gothic architects, they found an infinite variety in the arrangement of parts, producing the utmost elegance and beauty in the visible parts, combined with a great amount of constructive skill. Few churches were so rich in groining as St. Mary Redcliffe; every portion of the building was vaulted with stone. Nave, choir, aisle, porches, lady chapel—there were no less than twelve distinct varieties, from the simplest form in the old north porch, to the most beautiful complications in the nave, transepts, and beneath the tower. Among all of them, that of the transepts was the most remarkable for its lightness, richness, and constructive peculiarity. The finest views of the exterior of the church were from the north-east and north-west; the tower and north porch, the two most striking features of the whole, being seen most effectively from the latter point. The tower was divided into three stages, and was surmounted by four large pinnacles at the corners and a truncated spire in the centre. The lecturer then pointed attention to a model of the north porch. The building was hexagonal in plan, and at each of the disengaged angles stood a pentagonal buttress. The principal doorway facing the north was of singular form and most elaborate workmanship. In point of design there was nothing in this country that resembled it, but at the monastery of Batalha, in Portugal, there was one somewhat similar. He then spoke of the chamber to which such a poetical interest attached from its having contained the chests—indeed, though empty and broken, they existed there still—in which Chatterton professed to have discovered the Rowleian poems. "Surely," continued the lecturer, "if the genius of poetry had sought out a lodging-place she would not have met with one more to her taste, than this dimly-lighted chamber, set about with all the enchantments of gothic art, its symbolism and mysterious beauty—where sounds of the city would come up softened into a murmur by mingling with the silence of the holy pile, and where the broken rays, creeping through the narrow apertures of the massive walls, would—

Teach light to counterfeit a gloom,

just such as best harmonizes with the pleasant melancholy of those who love out of such chaos of confused light and darkness—of substance and shadow, indistinctly bleached—to form creations of their own, and live in worlds of their own imagining. Whatever added interest and fame may attach, through the inventions of the boy-bard Chatterton, to Redcliffe's holy pile, is but fair repayment of the inspiration which he derived from it, and which makes him the marvel of succeeding times. It was Redcliffe that taught him to kindle up the spirit of forgotten gothic verse with all its fancy, and beauty, and romance, in an age when poetry and architecture had both sunk into coldly imitative arts. And his genius took its tone from the building which he made his haunt, and grew up strongly in its shade; but when he removed to a less genial soil—when he left his solemn and solitary haunt in the muniment-room over Redcliffe porch for the busy streets and crowded taverns of London, it lost half its strength and all its beauty; and the author of 'Ella' and 'Harrold' became a writer of servile flatteries and virulent lampoons." Mr. Sealy went on to describe the open-work of the quartrefolij parapet, the roof, the buttresses, and to notice other portions of the porch. Time would not admit of his going

over in detail the other parts of the structure, suffice it to say, that they possessed in Bristol one of the completest and most beautiful ecclesiastical structures of the land. He was sorry that it was fast hastening to decay, and if not speedily restored, must fall into ruins. Some citizens—he hoped they were not many—had an idea that restoration was unnecessary, and they used John Bull's argument in favour of his house: "It has stood for six hundred years, and it is not likely that it will now fall down." Besides, they preferred the picturesque grey tints of its present time-coated walls, and he should prefer them too, if their preservation was consistent with the security of the structure. But when they came to examine its stonework and timbers, they found that it required something more than mere repairs—that it required restoration. The northern porch (that beautiful work of art) was crumbling to decay, as were other parts of the structure; and although there was enough left to furnish data for a complete restoration, yet it was only in parts. The stonework, if closely examined, was found to be a mass of soot and sand: the operation of the wet and frosts had reduced it to this state. He had gone on to the top of the church with Mr. Proctor, the churchwarden, and he there saw a piece of the masonry, with a piece of iron through its centre, which had fallen from one of the pinnacles. The iron had been expanded by the action of the weather, and the stone had split and fallen upon the roof, making a hole in the lead. Accidents of this kind were continually occurring; fragments of the ornaments were frequently falling; and, in fact, it was dangerous to stand under it. The timbers were in an equally decayed state. If they ascended the tower they would find, as they got higher up, that the stonework was in even a worse condition than below, the pinnacles especially. And if they looked down upon the turret-tops, they saw sticking up splintered and shapeless but huge masses of masonry, which seemed to bear out Chatterton's words,—

"Rocks upon rocks, with iron joined, survey."

In one night thirty feet in length of the parapet had fallen in. Such was the decaying state of the building that it was difficult to estimate the extent of the evil. The walls were in some parts, and particularly in the middle portion of the church, falling outwards, and a band could be placed between the roof and the walls on which it should rest. The restoration had now, however, commenced, and he trusted would steadily advance. The first stone was laid on the 25th April last, and one portion of the work was already nearly completed. The work was being done in the best possible style, and with a minute attention to the details of the original building. Several windows were in their places, and others ready to be put up. Some beautiful flying buttresses, which were completed, would give them an idea of the original beauty of the structure. The stone in use for the restoration had been brought from Caen, in Normandy, and it was the first of the kind used in Bristol since the building of St. James's Church, by Robert of Gloucester. It was a stone which worked easily, and was very durable, and not so likely to be acted upon by the weather as the stone from Dundry-hill, with which the old church was constructed. Mr. Sealy then expressed regret that the funds raised towards the restoration were nearly exhausted, and read an appeal from the committee. He expressed a hope that the liberality of the public would enable the work to be completed as it was being begun, imitating the former building with the greatest minuteness. Bristol could boast of the finest parish church in England, and if, in having brought the subject before their notice, he should have been fortunate enough to have contributed in the slightest way towards its restoration, he should feel abundantly repaid.

CHALK AND COAL FIRES!—The practical utility of chalk as an article of fuel has been tested within the last fortnight, according to a Salisbury paper, and with the most satisfactory results. Surrounded with coal, it gives a strong heat, and a clear fire, at half the usual expense; so that to the poor in the chalk districts it must be an invaluable boon.